ISSUE NO. 04

FIRST OF ITS KIND IN KERALA
FREE ONLINE CULTURAL WEEKLY NEWS MAGAZINE

INK OCHI

MAY 07-13 2021

Latest Art, Culture, Food, Tourism news, views and announcements

FREE CIRCULATION ONLINE

Sulaimani tea of Kerala

Malayalees Chayakada

Artworks for Sale

Book & Movie Reviews

Wildlife Photographs By: Mohendra Singh

Mana the last village of India

... and here we have the last tea shop

The Moment that you Left Me

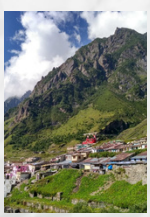
The moment that you left me
My heart split in two
One side filled with memories
The other side died with you.

I often lay awake at night
When the world is fast asleep
and take a walk down memory lane
With tears upon my cheek.

Remembering you is easy
I do it everyday
But missing you is a heartache
That never goes away.

I hold you tightly within my heart
And there you will remain
As my life goes on without you
But will never be the same.

-Doug Craven



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Editor's Note

Here we are, together for the fourth time and presently you are reading the fourth issue of INKochi, a new on-line magazine. A first of its kind in Kerala. We don't know each other yet in large numbers, but still we hope you will enjoy your time with our unpublished features, stories, interviews, reviews and reading tips in the future issues.

Why INKochi? Right question, but very vague as well. A question requiring several answers. On one side to clarify the reasons for which we launched into this new adventure, on the other to explain the choice of the name of our magazine. But let's proceed in good order.

INKochi comes from our wish to spread culture among Kochinites. Yes, we know, 'culture' may seem just a catchword we are using for putting up airs. How can we really take upon ourselves this task? How superior we must feel! Maybe it's true, but it all depends on the meaning the word 'culture' is given. In a time of economical crisis because of Covid pandemic across the globe, culture may seem a minor asset, but still it is essential for a modern society aiming at development.

Spreading culture means to observe the world and imagine something new, to engage actively in social life, to define identity, dignity and memories as fundamental values of the existence, both individual and collective, as George Orwell said. So, spreading culture is not a question of superiority, it is just a necessity.

Why a cultural magazine, then? True, but how many new good writers and artists are unable to reach their readers and other people across? Impossible to say, we can assume that unknown talents are a good many. We hope to help them and delight you, Dear Reader, with their new, original features, stories and artworks. We chose to publish their contributions because they are highly suitable for on-line distribution, and then because, unfortunately, in our country this narrative genre has never reached a real cultural dignity.

However, we will not publish only original stories. We won't – and this is precisely the reason explaining the name of this magazine – because INKochi will not only be devoted to the art and craft, but also to the fusion, or the crossings among cultures, of genres and experiences. Dealing with culture also means watching movies, listening to music, taking pictures, meeting people, asking themselves questions and, from time to time, simply having a cup of coffee. This is what we'd like to be, also with your help: culture promoters, street crossers, and doubt raisers.

So, nice to meet you, Dear Reader. We hope and wish that you can come across us over and over again, and continue your way with us.

Be happy, you all!

Varghese T. Thomas

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Artist: Subodh Kerkar

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INDIA'S LAST TEA SHOP" IN

Mana Village

CHAMOLI, UTTARAKHAND

By: Sharmila

Mana is a village in the district of Chamoli in the Indian state of Uttarakhand.

It is a last village before the Mana Pass, near Badrinath and is 24 KM from the border of India and Tibet/China in the Himalayas.
It is located on the northern terminus of National Route 58 & its been designated as a 'Tourism Village' by the Uttarakhand government.

<<
View from Mana village

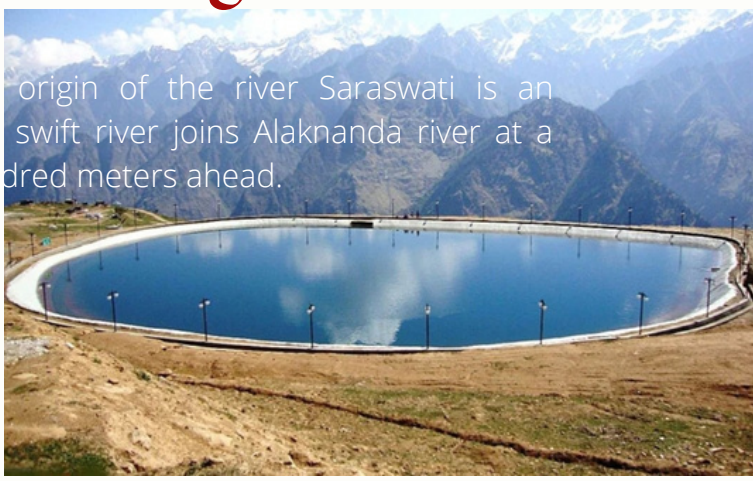
With 10,248 ft above sea, Mana village holds a lot of mythological relevance and we can actually see traces of the Mahabharata scattered across this small village

It's believed that Pandavas had passed through Mana when they on thier journey to heaven. There's a famous stone bridge created by Bheem (stronger among the Pandavas), aptly name Bheem Pul. It's a huge rock formed as a bridge across river Saraswati. **>>>**

Bheem Pul

Mana Village

Water gushing out from the origin of the river Saraswati is an interesting site. The short and swift river joins Alaknanda river at a confluence (sangam) a few hundred meters ahead.

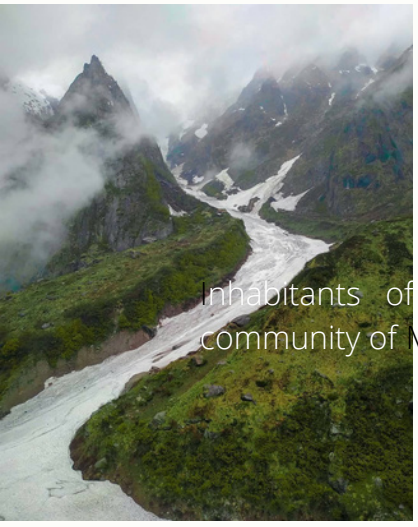


<< Ganesh Gufa

It has about 180 households and a population of about 600.
Veda Vyas Guha & Vyas Pothi where Veda Vyasa resided and composed the whole Mahabharata and Ganesha Guha where Lord Ganesh wrote the Mahabharata as dictated by Veda Vyasa, are some of the attractions here.

<< India's last tea shop

Many coffee shops here tell people that their shop is the last coffee shop on the Indian border.



Inhabitants of Mana village are the last generation of Bhotia community of Mongolian tribes. **>>>**

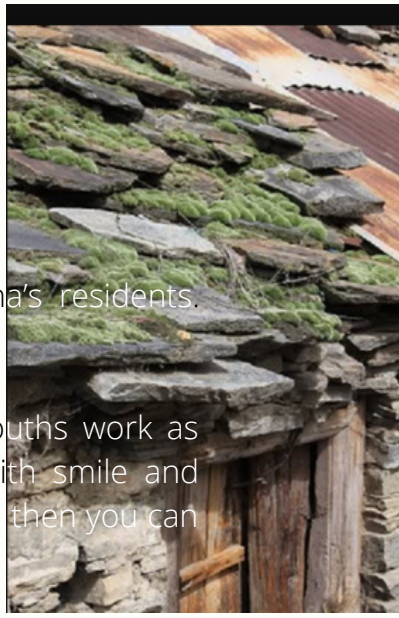
Mana Village

During October to March, because of the extreme winter conditions, they reside at Chamouli, 100 km away from Badrinath.

Chamoli

When Badrinath temple opens on 'Akshaya Tritiya', devotees start to visit. For Bhotias this is the time to come to Mana village.

The houses here are small with a kitchen garden in the backyard, where the locals grow their own vegetables like spinach, cauliflower and potato, and sell these to small hotels in Badrinath.



Guest houses are another source of income for Mana's residents. These houses usually consist of two rooms.

They charge Rs 500 to 1,000 per day, while many youths work as tourist guides. The owner of hotel, welcomes you with smile and serve you a hot cup of Tulsi Tea. If you have permission then you can travel to World Highest Moterable Road "Mana Pass".

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Artist: Sujata Chakraborty

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Story & Photos by: Naina Lazar

Chayakada

Cheta, oru Chaya : Nalla kadupathil, maduram korachu

The rains have hit the ground, a distinct earthy smell brews in the air. There is a breath of fresh air. The season has begun to change.

The splash of puddles, honking cars, people rushing and naughty school kids enjoying the downpour, splashing (dirty) water at each other. People try to clad themselves in raincoats and take protection inside their umbrellas.

Some seem to silently enjoy the cool misty air and the sudden darkness the rain brings in. A cherished memory for everyone who loves the rain.

Amidst this, in a distant corner, with the tarpaulins half leaking, a bunch of humans uninterrupted with the chaos enjoy a hearty conversation about their favorite movie or their contention on a political issue sipping on their favourite tea and holding the mandatory snack in hand. Whilst others offer the role of a listener, a few others stand outside and sip their tea in content. **>>>**

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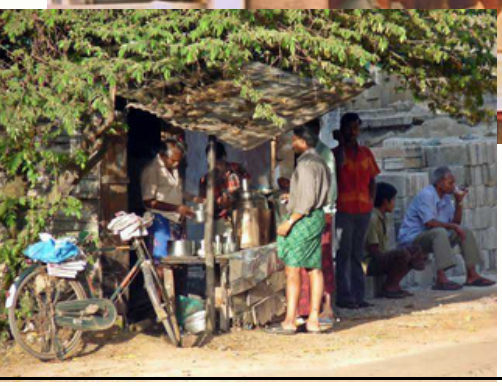
Chayakada

A place where intellectual conversations spar, debates are held, holds the coveted database of the entire neighborhood and where the rich and poor are treated equally. It sums up any Chaya kada you see around, lead by the man who seem to have multiple hands serving you Chaya and kadi(snacks like vada, bonda, bajji) at the same time instructing his assistant to clear the plates. His wit and charm has worked to his advantage of gaining loyal customers.



A scene well represented in reel and real life. From conspiracies to the eureka moments in a movie have been set in the backdrop of a Chaya kada. How the script transforms this place as a conspirators den that unfolds the dark and heinous crimes or it creates the perfect ambience for the actor to come up with the solution. The plot changes and the audience is in for a surprise. The prominence of this small space and the deep connection it holds to the people is well defined. The Chaya kada can outline the locality, the people and their traits. **>>**

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NEW WAYS OF LIVING TOGETHER

Any plot which is small, narrow, triangular or irregular in their shape and therefore not attractive - consult us.

Not considering these plots could be seen not only as a crisis of quantity but also a crisis of imagination and an absence of design. Utilising these small or irregularly-shaped plots of land for building housing is a vital strategy for us.

Narrow, small, or irregular lots could encourage more small-scale experiments by younger architects like us, and help us to imagine new forms of housing and new ways of living together.

Chayakada

A typical chayakada scene in Malayalam movies- Where gossip is shared and conspiracies are stirred.
You could click a picture and replace any chaya kada, the details remain the same. For a Malayali, Chaya is an emotion. It quenches their soul. In iterations they have spread far and wide quenching the evening thirst of tea for Malayalis across the globe.

Your visit to Kerala will not be complete if you haven't stopped at a tea shop, stood outside, had a pazhampori and complimented the man who swayed the glass up and down to give you the best, frothiest chaya. The ever smiling and charming chetan will accept your compliment and also give you a free lecture. It's all worth the time, for his description can amaze you and helps paint a beautiful picture of his life.

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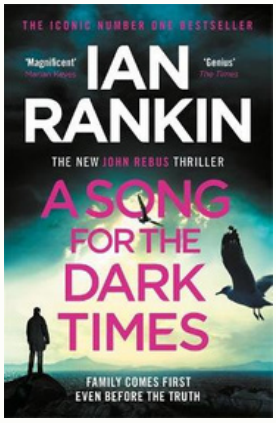
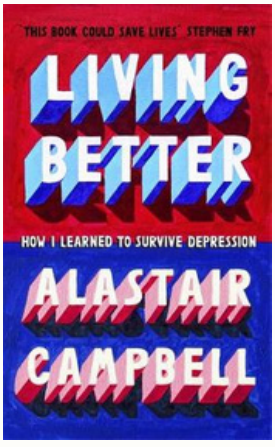
Living Better is Alastair Campbell's honest, moving and life affirming account of his lifelong struggle with depression. It is an autobiographical, psychological and psychiatric study, which explores his own childhood, family and other relationships, and examines the impact of his professional and political life on himself and those around him. More than a memoir, Living Better lays bare his relentless quest to understand depression not just through his own life but through different treatments.

Filled with pain but also with hope, this is a candid look at how his successes have been in part because of rather than despite his difficulties with mental health. Living Better is a call to arms and an extraordinary memoir in one compelling and inspiring narrative. This is a book that really could save lives.



When his daughter Samantha calls in the dead of night, John Rebus knows it's not good news. Her husband has been missing for two days.

Rebus fears the worst – and knows from his lifetime in the police that his daughter will be the prime suspect.



He wasn't the best father – the job always came first – but now his daughter needs him more than ever. But is he going as a father or a detective?

As he leaves at dawn to drive to the windswept coast – and a small town with big secrets – he wonders whether this might be the first time in his life where the truth is the one thing he doesn't want to find...

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Sulaimani Chaya (tea)

The Story of an Unusual Tea From Kerala

A BetterIndia Feature

An ambrosial tea full of fresh flavours, Sulaimani chai is admired by many, especially in southern India. But few fans know the fascinating tales behind this tea.

Languages blend, borders melt and cultures meet. All over a steaming cup of chai, a beverage that bridges an intensely multi-cultural society, and apparently does a good job at that.

In India, this humble agent of social interaction can be found across the country in little roadside shops. These unpretentious outlets often serve the cheapest and the most delicious types of tea. And among this illustrious list of tea varieties is the delightfully refreshing yet oft-overlooked Sulaimani chai.

Brewed to a beautiful shade of amber, Sulaimani chai is an ambrosial tea made without any milk and served with an invigorating dose of lemon. You may often find a mint or basil leaf floating within, infusing it with fresh herby flavours and a heady aroma. Or, in some cases, a sprinkle of ground cardamom and cinnamon may be added.

Either way, the concoction is superb and admired by many, especially in southern India. But few fans of Sulaimani chai know the tale of how this tea got its name.

According to folklore, Sulaimani tea is believed to have Arab origins. **>>>**

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Sulaimani Chaya (tea)

It is said that Prophet Mohammed used to enjoy drinking a beverage called ghava with dates and black pepper (but no tea) added to it.

With time, the Arabs inherited the tradition of drinking ghava but made some slight changes to the ancient recipe.

Later, the beverage was brought to the southern Malabar coast of India by Arab traders who were frequent visitors there. The cultural intermingling that followed led to the addition of local spices and the replacement of dates with sugar. Somewhere along the line, tea was added to the drink.

It was also in Malabar that it started being called Sulaimani — in Arabic, the name Sulaiman translates to "man of peace".

Interestingly, people looking for authentic Arabic ghava should head to Barkas, an area in Hyderabad's old city known for its strong roots in Arab countries. In winter, dozens of outlets and roadside stalls in and around Barkas offer piping hot ghava priced anywhere between Rs.10 and Rs.20 per cup.

Today, Sulaimani chai is often served after heavy meals such as biryani throughout the Malabar region. A great digestive drink, it is also a little-acknowledged but crucial part of marriage menus in the Mappilah Muslim community of Kerala.

No matter how elaborate the wedding feast or that every guest has been stuffed to an inch of his or her life, everyone in this community always has a little room left for a Sulaimani. Simmered to the right shade of gold in huge vats, the tea is served in tiny glasses, occasionally with a few strands of saffron. **>>>**

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SULAIMANI CHAYA (TEA)
A Ramadan Season Special
Recipe by:
Faeza Abdul Majeed
INGREDIENTS:
Black tea dust: 1 teaspoon
Elaichi: 3 nos. (crushed)
Cinnamon: 1 inch piece
Clove: 2 nos.
Mint leaves: 4-5 nos.
Sugar: Add to taste
Water: 2 cups (400 ml)
RECIPE: Serves 5 to 6
*Boil water with all ingredients
*Add sugar when it boils
*Add tea dust when it boils well and turn off the stove
*Strain it and add a dash of lime
*Serve 5 to 6 cups of Mohabbat!

Sulaimani Chaya (tea)

So integral is the sunset-coloured chai to the rhythm of life in Kerala that it finds several mentions in the state's cultural landscape. Legendary Malayalam writer Vaikom Muhammad Basheer would carry flasks full of his beloved 'Sulaimani' with him wherever he went. There is even a restaurant called Sulaimani 168 in Thrissur!

The deceptively delicious tea has even made its way to the state's prolific film industry. In the film, Ustad Hotel, for instance, the protagonist (a young aspiring chef straight out of college) uses cups and cups of Sulaimani chai to bond with his grandfather.

In one of the most endearing scenes from the movie, he sits by the sea with his grandfather and watches the sunrise. Between them sits a kettle of piping hot Sulaimani tea. Moreover, as he watches his grandfather slave over a stove, the protagonist learns to appreciate the smaller things in life.

As the hardworking grandfather says, ***"Oro Sulaimanilum oru ithiri Mohabbat venam. Adhu Kudikumbol, logam ingene padhukazhai vanu nikenam."*** (Every Sulaimani needs a bit of love in it. When you drink it the whole world comes to a standstill.)

It appears that a cup of tea can truly change lives!

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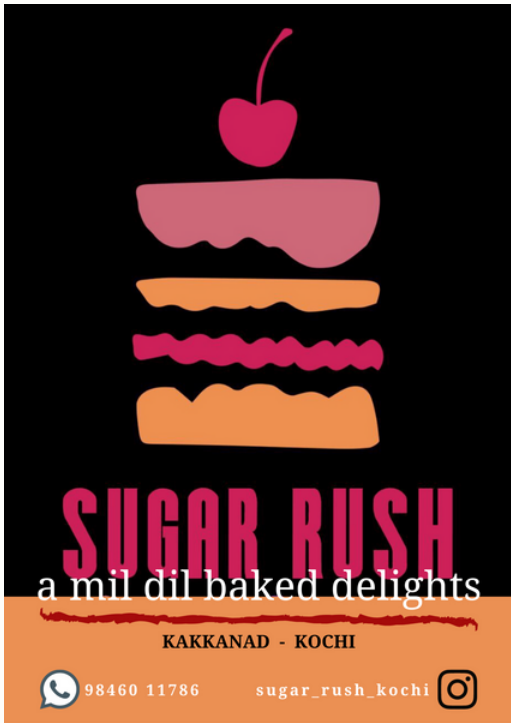

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Nutritionals per 100ml - Energy Kcal: 28, Fat (g): 0, Carbohydrates (g) 6, of which sugars (g): 5, Protein: 0

A blend of quinine, sand-filtered water, organic cane sugar, sweet mandarin, basil, and cardamom. Bengal Bay's spiced orange and basil tonic water presents a sweet mandarin citrus forward flavor with a basil finish. It has a natural sweetness and light bitterness packed with a refreshing aftertaste and just the right amount of carbonation.

Organic Mandarin Oranges from Coorg, Cardamom from Kerala and Basil from UP

Flavor notes: sweet tang from the orange with herby zest finish from the basil and balanced bitterness from the quinine

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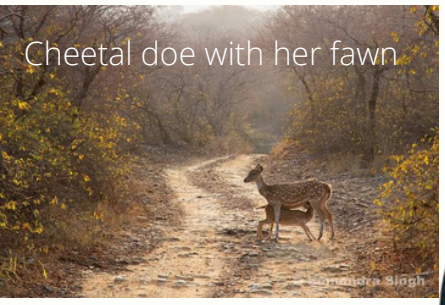
Wildlife Photographs

By: Mohendra Singh

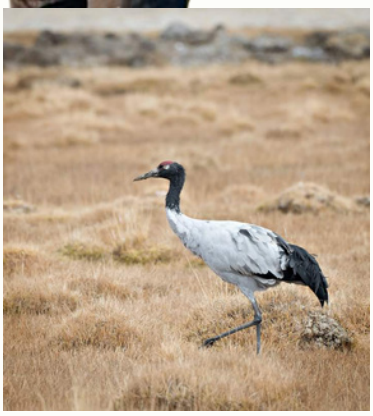


Cheetal doe with her fawn

Large mugger crocodile.
Ater Ghat,
Chambal River,
Jarar, U.P.

Urial galloping across a steep slope, Leh.

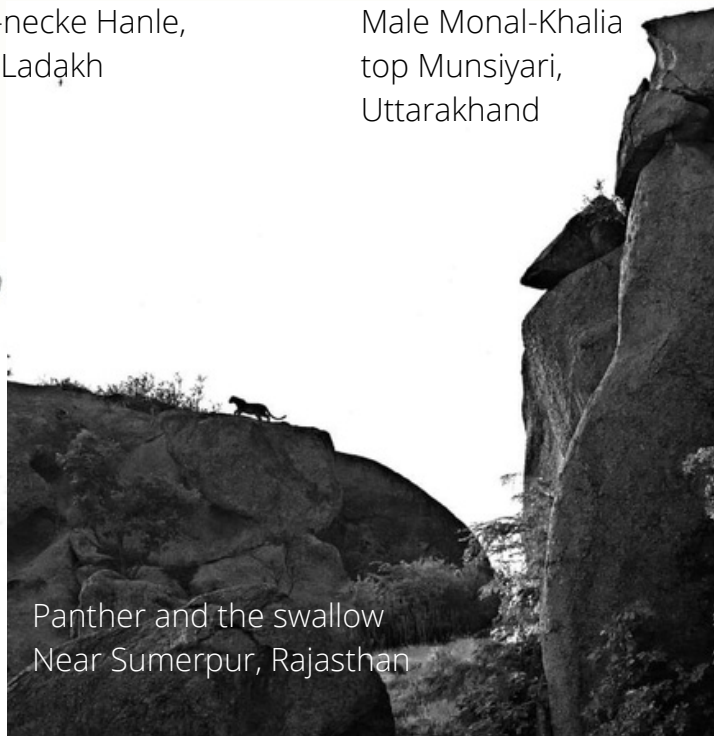
Leopard & Tiger
Ranthambhore, National Park



Black-necke Hanle,
Ladakh

Male Monal-Khalia
top Munsiyari,
Uttarakhand

Snow Leopard
on a kill.
Kibber village,
Spiti valley.



Panther and the swallow
Near Sumerpur, Rajasthan

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Amidst the intricate linoleum like patterns of celestial beings and geometric shapes in the Radha Krishna temple, almost certainly an offshoot of the Mughal style, the lone ceiling fan, with names of three donors mentioned on each wing, serves as a constant reminder that charity, like justice, must not only be done, but must also be seen to be done.

DADA SIBA, KANGRA VALLEY, HIMACHAL PRADESH

Thought by ILF Expert Lokesh Ohri

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review

By Nadini Ramnath

This movie - Biriyaani, directed by Sajin Baabu, is ostensibly about the problems faced by a young Muslim woman whose brother has been radicalised and has joined the Islamic State. The disappearance of Khadeeja's brother ends her life as she knows it – her husband, reeling from a community boycott, distances himself from her, and the police start hounding her.

Saddled with a mentally challenged mother and cut off from her son, things look bleak for Khadeeja, but she finds hope and strength in unusual ways. Freed from mechanical sex with her husband and left to her own devices, Khadeeja embarks on an often perilous transformation, in which flesh – her own and the one used to make the biriyani dish – play an important role.

This movie combines Khadeeja's spiritual-sexual quest with an inquiry into the prejudice faced by the families of Muslims accused of being terrorists.

The film was partly inspired by the idea of how Muslim families pay the price when a member gets radicalised. "We read day in and day out about such issues, but how lives and livelihoods are affected is never discussed," the filmmaker observed.

Baabu was also interested in the condition of Muslim women in small-town Kerala – "their lack of freedom, be it sexual or any other kind, both in their own families and in society". He also strove to explore how "the majority of the men see their women as objects for fulfilling their desires".

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